

Steph's Resistance as Hostess in Confronting the Power of Club's Management in Susanna Quinn's *Glass Geishas*

Thesis

Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Bachelor Degree of

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UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya



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ABSTRACT

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In this study, the researcher analyses *Glass Geishas* novel by Susanna Quinn. The study focuses on analyzing the problem of hostess life in workplace as class conflict phenomenon and the resistance of hostess which is represented by Steph as class struggle to the power club's management. The aims of this thesis are to describe the hostess problem and resistance in confronting the power of the club's manager. To answer the problem, this research uses Marxist feminism approach and resistance theory to analyze the struggle of Steph as main character in the novel. The result of the study shows that hostess has many problems in their working place, such as abuse, financial problem, and illegal working and those problems cause them to confront the power of club's management to get their right back.

Keyword: Abuse, financial, illegal working, resistance, hostess, class conflict

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Human naturally are born as individual and social creatures (Suarmini 78). As individual creature, human has a unique characteristic which is different from others. It includes the way of thinking, feeling, and behavior. But, human cannot live by him/herself. It can be seen since human were born (baby) which needs other to help them with their lives, such as eating, drinking, and protecting. Therefore, human as social creature usually have social need to live in a group, such as family, society, or organization. In the group, human can interact or communicate with others which usually based on their same characteristic or purpose (Soekanto 75). It is such as a rich man chooses other rich man as friend, boss with boss, educator with educator. Through this way, the social groups are formed in society. As what Auguste Comte stated that the society does not only consist of a group of people, but also a system which is formed by social relationship that presented a reality with different characteristics of society (292). Thus from the different characteristic and purpose, one group can be distinguish from other groups.

Peter L. Berger also said that in life, there are classes that divided based on the ownership of property. The first is bourgeois who own the factories, corporations, and form the ruling class. The second is proletariat, the mass of workers who are exploited by the ruling class (44). Usually, the case of class division occurs in workplace which consists of employer and employee. It is

The social phenomenon above actually becomes an inspiration for author to present it through literary works. From literature, the phenomenon of society may become the mirror for people to know what actually happened in society, such as the characteristic of society. It is relevant to Wellek statement that literature is an expression of society (90). It means that literature becomes the media for author as part of society to describe it. Georg Lukacs also said that

There are some authors who talk about class conflict and class struggle of society through literature. Some of the examples are Alice Walker with *The Color*

This novel becomes interesting to study, because this novel presents the class conflict and class struggle of hostess in workplace. Susanna Quinn as the author of *Glass Geishas* who ever worked as hostess beside her profession as journalist and writer, also makes this novel interesting to analyze (Quinn 563). Through those experiences, Quinn describes the hostess life and expresses the

1.2 Statement of Problem

1.2.1 How is hostess life described in *Glass Geishas*?

[illegible]

and women, either it is economically, politically, and education. So, this movement starts to see the women's problem in public areas (social life). In literature, it is one of the theories of literature which is influenced by Marxism. As Karl Marx argued that all historical and social developments are determined by the forms of economic production, Marxist feminism have attacked the 'classist' values of the prevailing capitalist society of the west as the world also gradually becomes 'globalized' (Guerin 234). It means the focus of Marxist feminism is on women's problem relates to the class of society, especially in economic production. It is related to Selden statement that Marxist Feminism sought to extend Marxism's analysis of class into a women's history of their material and economic oppression (125). So, Marxist feminism is theory that is used to analyze the class of women in public area, especially around the capitalist society.

In this study, Marxist feminism is used as approach of study to know the problem of hostess, especially the class of hostess in the club as workplace. As Guerin stated that Marxist feminism approach is encoded with class interests, connecting it to the systematic exclusion of women, nonwhites, and working class (234). From this approach, this study will explore the problem of hostess in workplace relates to the class interests connecting to the systematic of working class. Therefore, this approach focuses on Michele Barrett Marxist feminism thought. She thinks that feminism not only focuses on the domestic problem of women under patriarchal system, but also in public area which is controlled by capitalist society.

power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in position of exteriority in relation to power (95). So, the resistance of society cannot be separated from the power relation, because this act appears as the protest or resist the domination of power, such as upper class power in society. Either it is the power with money of boss forms, power of leaders, even knowledge of educators.

Resistance is not always presented by protest in violence action forms. It may only hidden action, such as swearing, insulting, or disobedient to the rule of the power. According to Stellen Vinthagen, resistance is often connoted as other similar concept that is actually different, such as protest or revolution (Yumitro 341). It means that resistance not always presented into public, especially the resistance of lower class which usually presented covertly. Because they do not

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Hidden action is also the form of resistance which sometimes does not seem like resistance. It is the ideological resistance of Scott that is disguised,

class. It is why they used Marxist and Marxist feminism to analyze also. It is started from the first researcher that used radical feminism theory, while the second previous study used Marxist theory, and the last researcher who also used Marxist theory. It is the similarity with this study that is also used Marxist feminism as approach of this study.

Beside it, this study also has differences with the previous study above. The first is the object of study. This study used *Glass Geishas* novel as object of study. The second is the theory. This study focuses on Marxist feminism which discuss about the problem of women in society especially in workplace. This study also used resistance theory by James Scott to analyze the struggle of main character as the response to resist the capitalist.

power to manage the club, such as recruitment process of hostess. The manager was someone who helped Mama-san in managing the club. It is such as manage the wage of hostess, seat hostess with customers, or reprimand hostess who did a mistake. Usually, the manager of hostess club was men. The others staff were bartenders. They could be girl or boy. Their function was to make a drink behind the chair's club. Usually, the drink prepared was alcohol such as whisky, wine, cocaine, etc. Some clubs may also have bouncers. Their function is kept a security of the club if disturbance happened. Usually, they stand by in front of the club's door. (Anne Allison at the Wayback Machine 02)

The last staff of club is hostess. Hostess was a waitress who catered the drink to customers and has attentive conversation with them. According to Susanna Quinn, hostess was like geisha that was paid to smile and party with rich men, poured drinks, light cigarettes, sang karaoke, and tried to ignore the customers who invited to hotel rooms after work. Because hostess was not supposed to have sex with customers (The Grim Truth about Life as Japanese Hostess Articles 01).

The majority of customers were from elite class such as film star, famous politician, businessman, etc. (Quinn 23). Because hostess club was the way for rich man to sit with pretty young girl and relax with it after worked (102). Therefore in serving the customers, hostess was required to look pretty, friendly and calm, no loud or bored, and tried to make customers drink more. Because of from it, hostess got paid (101).

The condition of hostess clubs above was different from hostess club that was presented by Susanna Quinn in *Glass Geishas*. It was about Calamity Janes club which was the setting of this novel. Janes club was a western club in Roponggi, Japan which employed foreign hostess such as from America, London, Australia, Russia, etc. It was a hostess club that thought hostess, geisha, courtesan, prostitute, all the same thing (Quinn 86). So in this club, management not only provided hostess to cater food or beverage, but also sex service for customers. Usually, it was started by spiking the hostess first. Spiking is manager or customer's action of putting drug in the girl's drink (Quinn 275).

It departed from normal hostess club or Japanese hostess club. It was happened because of hostess in Janes were foreigners with illegal status. It means they came to Japan with tourist visa, but they work there in Japan. It made them illegal workers. This was the condition that manager of Janes took the advantages from it. They can pressure the hostess to work overtime, tripped in sex industry, exploited, etc. because hostess did not get law protection, either it is from police or embassy. Therefore, the manager as the owner of the club controlled their employees based on their rule.

Those are the condition of foreign hostess in Roppongi, Japan which will be discussed in this part. The condition here focused on the problem of hostess in workplace or hostess club. It is such as abuse, unpaid problem, and illegal worker status.

The quotation above described the condition of Steph when *Yakuza* came to her in Janes club. *Yakuza* here was a gangster which Mama-san, the owner of Sinatra's club sent to ask Steph pay her debt. Unfortunately, *yakuza* used violence ways such as gripped Steph arm tight which hurt her.

“You don’t know my name. Why do you want to know I’m regular?”
 “I just wondered, that’s all.” Said Steph, feeling a hand on her leg again.
 This time, the hand belonged to the chubby man on her other side. She
 leaned back the other way and turned her body completely around to face
 the Japanese man. (121)

[illegible]

and respected like a woman. The customers also did not have the opportunity to abuse except enjoyed the service. Thus, in this situation the customers paid for the service only. It was the good hostess who was distinguished from prostitution (Quinn 131).

This trick was also applied by Steph to served Mr. Yamamoto. He was a Japanese man, which Steph wanted to win him as her *dohan*. It can be seen in the quotation below:

Once she was at the table, Steph poured drinks slowly and carefully just like she'd learned at the tea ceremony, taking care over every gesture. She made sure the glass was always centred on the coaster and the whisky bottle faced the same way, ignoring the cold stares from the waiting staff. Mr. Yamamoto-san seemed to enjoy the care and precision with which Steph attended to him, and told her ***he'd for her the next time he came in.***

Tea serving trick in the quotation above also helped Steph to win Japanese men. Mr. Yamamoto as *dohan*. In the quotation was showed that Mr. Yamamoto

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Tea serving trick in the quotation above also helped Steph to win Japanese men, Mr. Yamamoto as *dohan*. In the quotation was showed that Mr. Yamamoto finally promised to come next time for her. It meant he wanted to become Steph's regular customers. In fact, when hostess got customers meant they got more bonuses.

The second trick of geisha is drinking game. It was the traditional game in Japan, which was used by geisha to help *danna* have fun after work. It was delivered by Mrs. Kimono that ‘...All sorts of ways. The tea ceremony, you already saw. And we play music, perform dances. Very often we play drinking

The quotation above described about Steph who found her passport and Annabel's passport in the manager office. It was the passport that was taken by club's management of Calamity Janes to control hostess. It was like what Annabel wrote in her diary that 'Janes keep your passport so if you hate it you can't leave and it scares me (Quinn 141)'. Passport here was used by Steph as proof on her statement in the police station. Besides passport, she also brought a drug. It described in the citation below:

At the police station, Steph made a statement that the Janes club used drug to spike hostess and took the passport to take many advantages from hostess. In the quotation above showed that Steph put the passport and Rohypnol as a proof. Reporting here is the public resistance of Steph because she presented it openly. Even though, she knew the consequence that she will deported and pay the fine for her illegal worker status. But it did not make her give up. From Steph statement, police will make an investigation to the Janes club. Meanwhile the consequence of the investigation, it was police knew the illegal status of hostesses who worked in there.

In the controlling management, the hidden transcripts was presented through the actions or behaviors of hostess which against the rule of the club. It was like had a boyfriend, bottle backing, and steal the regular customer to another club. Meanwhile the public transcript was showed by rejecting and reporting the club to police that was done by Steph as the main character in the novel.

From the explanation above, could be concluded that the class conflict which elite class controlled the lower class finally evoked the class struggle of the victims. It was a response of employee who was abused, exploited, and oppressed by the employer. It proved the statement of Michele Foucault that where there is power, there is resistance. Because of when class conflict appeared, people could be chose to resist or not. It was presented by Susanna Quinn in her novel *Glass Geishas*.

both club management and hostess. There are ways that the hostess used to control the customers. They are geishas trick, hostess trick, and marriage. In controlling the customers, the resistance form that includes the hidden transcript is geisha's and hostess' tricks while marriage is the public transcript. Steph's second resistance is controlling the management. It is presented through some ways. They are resisting the club's rule such as do bottle-backing, rejecting the management's offer, and reporting the club to police. In controlling the management, resisting the club's rule includes in hidden transcript while rejecting and reporting includes in public transcript. In this situation hostess showed their resistance off to public. This study shows that Steph's resistance is also seen as the struggle of lower class in confronting the power of elite class.

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